

## I. COUNTY DESCRIPTION

### A. County Profile

Claiborne County was created in 1801 from Grainger and Hawkins counties; named in honor of William C. C. Claiborne (1775-1817), judge of the superior court of Tennessee, U. S. congressman and senator, governor of the Mississippi Territory and of Louisiana. Claiborne County is 434 square miles in size with approximately 60.2 persons per square miles and is divided by the Cumberland Mountains. The Cumberland Gap is the main local route via the Cumberland Gap Parkway from North to South. Part of the Wilderness Road can be walked in Cumberland Gap, Tennessee, which is a town in one of Claiborne County's five census county divisions. It offers one of the most scenic views of the pinnacle and gap. The Gap was first explored in 1750 by Thomas Walker, who was hired to find land beyond the Blue Ridge Mountains. He found the door that would lead settlers to the region. During the Civil War, the gap was called the Keystone of the confederacy and the Gibraltar of America. Both the North and South protected the Gap against an invasion, which never came. The Federal Army finally abandoned it in 1866.

Today the Cumberland Gap is the main local route North and South, via Cumberland Gap Parkway. In 1966, a four-lane tunnel opened under the gap providing a new North-South, East-West route, restoring the gap as it was with the first pioneers. This expansion for tourism will inspire new economic and employment opportunities for the region as the county continues to prosper and grow.

### *Claiborne County Community Profile*

#### *Location*

Region: East Tennessee  
Square Miles: 434  
Distance from Knoxville: 40 miles

#### *Population (1995 est.)*

County: 26,137  
Male: 12,666  
Female: 13,471  
Minority: 1.7%

#### *Cities/Towns*

Cumberland Gap Town  
New Tazewell Town  
Tazewell Town

#### *Education*

County School System  
1 Private &/or Parochial,  
2 Technology Centers  
*Lincoln Memorial College*

#### *Climate*

Annual Average Temperature: 56°  
Annual Average Precipitation: 47"  
Elevation: 1,340' above Sea Level

#### *Natural Resources*

Minerals: Coal  
Timber: Oak, Poplar, Hickory, Cedar and Pine

### *Claiborne County Selected Economic Indicators*

#### *Labor Force Estimates*

Total Labor Force: 12,847  
Unemployment: 649 (5.1% of labor force)  
Unemployment Rate: 8.0

#### *Tax Structure*

County Property Tax Rate per \$100: \$3.18

*Per Capita Income (1994): \$13,403*